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NEW ENGLAND IN THE REIGN OF CHARLES II.

It seems to be a law of the human mind, that the feeling of loyalty and the desire of conserving old institutions diminishes as the dis-

inherent in human nature, and distance from the seat of power suggests ideas of independence.



EJECTION OF THE SHERIFF BY THE POPULACE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE.



GEORGE BAXTER HOLDING UP THE CHARTER TO THE INHABITANTS OF RHODE ISLAND.

tance is increased between the individual and the land of his ancestry. A new soil, whereon all the faculties of man have full scope for their development, fosters that love of freedom which is

The law to which we have alluded showed itself in operation in the American colonies of Great Britain at a very early period. The vessel that conveyed to America the intelligence of the restoration

of monarchy in England, bore from the vengeance of Charles II., two of the judges who had signed the warrant for the execution of his father—Whalley and Goffe. Endicott, the governor of Massachusetts, received them with kindly hospitality; and before the royal order for their arrest reached Boston, the fugitives were enabled to escape to New Haven. The authorities of the Bay State, being required to execute the warrant, published a proclamation against them; but no one betrayed them, or made any attempt to accomplish the royal purpose. Dixwell, another of Charles's judges, joined them shortly afterwards, and, in spite of all the efforts to apprehend them, they passed the remainder of their days in America.

It was not until nearly twelve months after the receipt of the news of the restoration that Charles was publicly proclaimed in New England, and then all demonstrations of joy were strictly prohibited. The restrictions which the English government had placed upon their commerce had aroused a feeling of indignation among the colonists, and the General Court had drawn up a declaration of rights, which evinces their boldness and the advanced state of development which their political ideas had already attained. They claimed a degree of liberty which left the crown but small prerogative, though not more than had already been conferred, by royal charter, upon the colonists of Connecticut and Rhode Island. But his baffled intentions of revenge probably rankled in the mind of Charles II., for he refused the same rights to Massachusetts, and a struggle immediately commenced between the colonists and the government at home.

A remonstrance was drawn up for presentation to the king; but some of the sturdy democrats thought this unnecessary, arguing, that their compact was to pay a certain amount to the king, and that all notice of him beyond that was only by way of civility. The remonstrance was received unfavourably, and Massachusetts was ordered to send Bellingham, the governor, Hawthorne, an influential magistrate, and three other gentlemen, to England, to answer the charges made against the colony. The General Court assembled to deliberate upon the measures to be adopted; and, after fortifying themselves with prayers and psalms, they decided upon refusing to comply with the royal mandate. The colonists triumphed; England was then engaged in war with Holland, and in no condition to reduce them to obedience. The Navigation Act became a dead letter; not a single custom-house was erected, and the port of Boston, enjoying all the benefits of unrestricted commerce, became the most prosperous on the shores of the Atlantic.

The charters conferred by the king upon the colonists of Connecticut and Rhode Island have already been mentioned. The results were such as gladden the heart of the philanthropist to contemplate. Free and self-governed, enjoying all of independence but the name, the population of Connecticut doubled in twenty years, and such a degree of material prosperity and social happiness was attained as had never been known before. "To describe its condition," says Bancroft, "is but to enumerate the blessings of self-government by a community of farmers, who have leisure to reflect, who cherish education, and who have neither a nobility nor a populace." Contemporary writers speak of it as realising the Homeric fable of the Age of Gold. So great was the general prosperity, and the sense of morality, that locks and bolts were unknown; the richest of the colonists had no other fastening to their doors than a simple latch. We again quote Bancroft. "There were neither rich nor poor in the land, but all had enough. There was venison on the hills, abundant fish in the rivers, and sugar was gathered from the maple of the forest. The soil was originally justly divided, or held faithfully in trust for the public and for new-comers. Happiness was enjoyed unconsciously; like sound health, it was the condition of a pure and simple life. There was for a long time hardly a lawyer in the land. The husbandman who held his own plough, and fed his own cattle, was the great man of the age; nor was any one superior to the matron, who, with her busy daughters, kept the hum of the wheel incessantly alive, spinning and weaving every article of dress. Fashion was confined within narrow limits; and pride, which aimed at no grander equipage than a pillion, exulted only in the common splendour of the blue and white linen gown with sleeves reaching to the elbow, and the snow-white flaxen

apron, which, primly starched and ironed, was worn on public days by every woman of the land. The time of sowing and the time of reaping marked the progress of the year; and the plain dress of the working day and the more trim attire of the Sabbath, the progress of the week.

"Every family was taught to look up to God as the fountain of all good. Yet life was not sombre; the spirit of frolic mingled with innocence; religion itself assumed a garb of gaiety, and the annual thanksgiving was as joyous as it was sincere. Frugality was the rule of life, both private and public. Half a century after the concession of the charter, the annual expenses of government did not exceed eight hundred pounds.

"Education was always regarded as an object of deepest concern, and common schools existed from the first. A small college was early established, and Yale owes its birth to ten worthy fathers, who in 1700 assembled at Brandford, and each one laying a few volumes on a table, said, 'I give these books for the founding of a college in this colony.'

"Political education was a natural consequence of the constitution. Every inhabitant was a citizen, and every citizen, irrespective of wealth, condition, or any other circumstance, was possessed of the franchise. When, therefore, the progress of society and of events furnished a wider field of action than mere local politics afforded, the public mind was found equal to its circumstances; emerging then from the quiet of its origin into scenes where a new political world was to be created, the sagacity which had regulated the affairs of the village gained admiration in the field and the council."

The constitution of Rhode Island was as liberal as that of Connecticut. George Baxter, of whom nothing more is known, arrived with it on the 24th of November, 1663, and was received with a solemn joy, worthy of men who fear God, love their fellows, and respect themselves. Our second illustration represents Baxter holding up the charter to the gaze of the immense concourse of people that was assembled on the shore to receive it. The scene is thus described by Bancroft in his history:—"The letters of the agent were opened, and read with good delivery and attention; then the charter was taken forth from the precious box that held it, and was read by Baxter in the audience and view of all the people; and the letters, with his Majesty's royal stamp and broad seal, with much becoming gravity, were held up on high, and presented to the perfect view of the people." Perfect liberty of conscience was secured by this charter, and Rhode Island, like Connecticut, became, in the words of the pious John Haynes, "a refuge and receptacle for all sorts of consciences." The constitution of Maryland, while disregarding the minor distinctions of sect, required subscription to the faith of the Gospel; but that of Rhode Island was based on the broad and beautiful principle of universal brotherhood, and excluded no man, whatever his belief, from the rights of citizenship.

New Hampshire was at this period a portion of the state of Massachusetts, and shared in its prosperity and happiness; but in 1679, the English government, which had neither forgiven nor forgotten the obstinate resistance of the sturdy colonists of the Bay, separated New Hampshire from its jurisdiction, and erected it into a royal province, the president and council of which were to be appointed by the crown. The change was unwelcome to the people; and the discontent with which they viewed it was increased by the attempts of one Mason to enforce a claim to the lands of the province, a claim which had long laid dormant, but which was now revived with the concurrence and support of the English government. Mason deputed as his agent a needy adventurer named Cranfield, who arrived in the province with a mortgage on all the lands for twenty-one years, and the appointment of governor conferred upon him by the home government. He calculated upon realising a splendid fortune, as, by an arrangement between Mason and the government, one-fifth of all quit-rents had been allotted to him as his salary; but in this anticipation he was greatly disappointed. The colonists opposed a steady and determined resistance to all his measures. Associations were formed for the purpose of hindering the collection of the taxes which he imposed. The sheriff and his officers were forcibly expelled wherever they presented themselves to distrain upon the goods and chattels of the inhabi-

ants ; and in one place he was seized, and having his arms bound behind him, and a halter about his neck, was in that ignominious manner conducted out of the province.

The contumacy of Massachusetts was yet to be punished. In 1678 the royal arms were put up in the court-house, the oath of allegiance was required, and new efforts were made to enforce the provisions of the Navigation Act. The General Court, fearing for its charter, but still desirous of maintaining the right of self-government, gave validity to that measure by an act of its own. The king was exasperated rather than mollified by this step, and was more determined than ever to annul the charter. A deputation to avert his anger was unsuccessful. The entire population was roused and agitated ; the General Court deliberated a whole

fortnight as to whether the king's forbearance should be purchased by implicit submission to his will. The majority were still firm. "The civil liberties of New England," said they, "are part of our inheritance ; shall we give that inheritance away ? It is objected that we shall be exposed to great sufferings. Better suffer than sin. It is better to trust the God of our fathers than to put confidence in princes. If we suffer because we dare not comply with the wills of men against the will of God, we suffer in a good cause, and shall be accounted martyrs in the next generation and at the great day." This view of the matter was accepted and persisted in ; and on the 2nd of July, 1685, the act for annulling the charter arrived in Boston, where it was received with all the signs of mourning and woe.

FRENCH HAY; OR, LOST AND FOUND

A TALE OF ENGLISH VILLAGE LIFE.

BY MRS. BURBURY, AUTHOR OF "FLORENCE SACKVILLE," "THE GRAMMAR SCHOOL BOYS," ETC. ETC.

CHAPTER I.

ABOUT sixty miles from London, on one of the great turnpike roads, along which, before these railway times, there used to be an immense traffic, stands my native village. It is certainly one of the loveliest spots on earth, and that many besides myself have thought so, is evidenced by the number of beautiful residences which have been built about—not lately though ; for poor old John Tolley, who used, when I was a girl, to call himself architect and builder, and hold his head as high as any man in the place, having a monopoly of the whole trade, now lives in a small cottage by the church, and is glad to get a day's odd jobbing at the better sort of mason's work, when he can.

For building is quite gone out of fashion at French Hay ; nor indeed is it needed, since many of the best houses, which I remember filled with dashing county families, whose gay doings used to keep the whole place alive, are shut up now. Some are entirely deserted, and some are still kept on, though seldom occupied. One of the largest and most beautiful of those, upon whom the latter fate has fallen, is the Chauntry, an irregular though most attractive mass of building, the property, and once the frequent residence, of the Brandons, the oldest baronets in the shire.

Nowhere that I have ever been, is there, of its size, so exquisite a flower-garden, or, as Lady Ethel Brandon used to call it, a pleasure-ace, as at the Chauntry. The lawn, of that delicious turf into which the feet sink at every step, is perfect. Here and there it is studded with beds of flowers shaped in the most fantastic and graceful forms fancy can devise ; groups of beautiful but untidy cistuses stand about, covering the sward beneath, with hundreds of their delicate white leaves, while close by, are quaint tufts of the sweet heliotrope, which sigh out their fragrant breath at the feet of their pale queen the lily. Gleaming from under the dark shadows cast by the trees, are glowing knots of brilliant verbenas, which, when the slanting rays of the evening sun fall upon them, look like downy spots of scarlet velvet ; waving and tossing about in their untrained luxuriance, their naked wiry-looking stems hidden among the ivy out of which they spring, are multitudes of Lady Ethel's favourite hops, while nodding to them here and there, though keeping fast hold of their supporters, are passion-flowers and jessamine.

Round this charming spot, girdling it from intrusion, is a belt of evergreens and forest trees, the sombre hues of which are enlivened by the gay blossoms of all those kinds of flowering shrubs which flourish out of doors in England.

Along the top of this sweet lawn runs the west front of the house to which it belongs. It was a nunnery once, and although of course it was greatly altered, when first it fell into secular hands, much being added, and much pulled down to render it fit for general habitation, all was done in such good taste, the additions and deductions so artfully made, that even those best acquainted with the building cannot always fix the boundary line, nor tell which sunny parlour and genial chamber belonged to "the sisters," or to a later date.

Most of the rooms are low, and oak-panelled, with carved coilings and deep embayed windows ; two or three are tiny, odd-shaped places, such as one can easily fancy to have been cells of the recluses ; these are now converted into pantries and storerooms down stairs, and dressing-rooms above. The traditional refectory has become the drawing-room ; the chapel, with its lancet windows of richly-stained glass, its fretted roof, and wide folding-doors, is now the library ; and the parlour of the Revcrend Mother the dining-room. What is now the entrance hall was the great convent kitchen, and the old larders and butteries that adjoin make capital ante-rooms.

Ever since the time of Henry, when at the dissolution of monasteries the Chauntry fell into the hands of his especial favourite, Sir Thomas Brandon, Knight, and afterwards Baronet, it has been a pet and a hobby of the family. Each succeeding owner has done something for it ; and when its last possessor, the stately Lady Ethel, died, and it passed to her only son, the present baronet, it was as perfect as wealth and exquisite taste could make it.

Unhappily, however, for the Chauntry and French Hay, Sir Robert inherited little of his race's love for either place ; and being a fashionable young man, fond of travelling and society, he never visits them except during the shooting season, when a posse of sporting men come down with him, and after a few weeks' slaughter in the preserves and over the manor, they disappear as suddenly as they come.

A stranger passing through French Hay, and glancing at the residences I have described, interspersed as they are with many smaller, though equally attractive abodes, would naturally conclude that the society of the village must be excellent. The whole place gives one that impression, and such is the invariable conclusion to which all visitors come upon the first day or two of their sojourn ; while as invariable is their after verdict, that French Hay, with all its natural attractions, is—made by the people themselves—the most stupid, narrow-minded, silly little place on earth. I have lived there off and on all my life, and although I love it very dearly, especially the old churchyard, where my parents, brothers, sisters, husband, and children lie, I confess that the more I see of the outer world, the more convinced I am of the justice of the view which strangers take of my birthplace.

Several times within my recollection families have come to French Hay, taken some of the pretty vacant houses, and showed the greatest willingness to hold out the right hand of fellowship to their new neighbours. Disposed to be friendly with the inhabitants, they not unnaturally expected those individuals to show at least an equal courtesy to them ; but no, this is too much the fashion of larger, less exclusive places, for the French Hay people to adopt it ; and so, one by one, they drive all visitors away, and with a strange infatuation congratulate themselves upon their unfailing success—unfailing I say, because, with one exception, I never knew any persons courageous or patient enough, or who thought the *élite* of the village worth so much, as to endure their rudeness and wait for the turn of their caprice. And the history of this exception, so far as it has to do with French Hay, is the subject of the present tale.